

# Medicine Bow Landscape Vegetation Analysis (LaVA)

## Meeting Minutes

Cooperating Agencies Meeting  
March 21, 2018; 9:30 am – 3:00 pm  
In person or VTC

### In Attendance:

Aaron Voos	Brian Lovett	Frank Romero
Art Sigel	Carson Engelskirger	Jarod Delay
Bret Callaway	Chris Jones	Jessica Crowder
Brian Hall	Dana Egenhoff	Josh Peck
Justin Williams	Mark Conrad	Seth Kuchenbecker
Larry Hicks	Melissa Martin	Tim Douville
Leanne Correll	Russ Bacon	Tony Hoch

### Action Items:

- **March 23<sup>rd</sup> – DEIS Chapter 1 Comments:** Continue to send wanted changes to Melissa Martin no later than close of business March 23, 2018.
- **April 11<sup>th</sup> – LaVA Implementation Appendices:** The three small groups identified to develop LaVA Implementation appendices each have a Forest Service person as the Point of Contact (POC). The POC is responsible for convening and facilitating their respective Small Group. The Small Groups are responsible for conceptualizing what their respective appendix would contain and writing the appendix. Draft appendices are due by April 11, 2018.
- **April 11<sup>th</sup> – DEIS Chapter 2:** Chris Jones will continue editing Chapter 1 after hearing comments from the group. A draft of Chapter 2 will be shared with the cooperating agencies by April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2018.
- **April 18<sup>th</sup> – Next Cooperating Agency Meeting:** The agenda for this meeting will focus on the Implementation Appendices and Chapter 2 of the draft EIS. Pre-work will be provided in advance of the meeting.
- **Continued – Photo Submission:** Please provide before and after pictures of project work for use in the EIS.

### Agenda Topics:

#### 1. Forest Supervisor Time

##### DISCUSSION

- To release the DEIS by our May target, the pace of business is accelerating. The Forest Service is continuing to look for assistance from the cooperating agencies to make the work stronger and more efficient. Those volunteering for small groups and doing additional promoting of the project are helping to move the LaVA project forward.

- The partnerships between the agencies are helping to bridge gaps between the Forest Service and members of the public. The group believes it is vital to continue building on this relationship throughout all stages of the LaVA project.
- The Forest Service is continuing to educate the community on project details. The LaVA landing page on the Forest Service website has been updated. The updated page is user friendly, and contains facts, news releases, links, and photos. The LaVA project storyboard is still in the works.
- Chris Jones has completed a draft of Chapter 1 for the DEIS. It, along with the Issues and Alternatives Memo, was distributed to the specialists. The specialist's reports should be completed by the end of March.
- The Forest Service is working on two Farm Bill CEs on the Medicine Bow NF.

## **2. Priority Projects by Accounting Units**

### **DISCUSSION**

- The cooperating agencies submitted prioritized Accounting Units in which they would like to complete work. The group then brainstormed the project prioritization process and the criteria they would way in the decision. The criteria mentioned during this meeting are listed below:
  - Capacity
  - Purpose and Need
  - Multiple Resource Benefits
  - Desired v. Existing Conditions
  - Natural Events (e.g. Fire)
  - Safety
  - Funding
  - Accessibility and Economic Feasibility
  - Proximity to Existing Infrastructure (e.g. Roads)
  - Geographic Distribution
  - Winter Access
  - Partnerships/Collaborative Efforts
  - Socioeconomics
  - Clean Water Yield
  - Cross Jurisdictional
  - CRCT Populations
  - Targets
  - Cumulative Impacts in a Watershed
  - Fuel Monitoring
- It was noted that the Forest must meet its timber and fuels targets. However, the forest has yet to invest significant resources on where and how we will meet these targets during the life of the LaVA project. Therefore, the Forest is hopeful that a plan can be developed, in cooperation with the cooperating agencies, to meet their objectives and the Forest's targets. This flexibility will allow the parties to get the most "bang for the buck."
- Site-specific projects will not be in the EIS. The goal is to meet annually as Cooperating Agencies to determine upcoming year's projects. The group believes a qualitative

rather than a quantitative strategy to determine prioritized projects is necessary. The criteria used to make the decisions, however, should be identified in the EIS to ensure accountability.

- If cooperating agencies submit shapefiles, it may be easier to identify areas of overlap.
- The upcoming year's projects will be looked at again after the DEIS is complete.

## CONCLUSION

The group developed a list of criteria to prioritize future projects. It was noted that the Forest must meet its timber and fuels targets but is flexible in how they meet those targets. Therefore, the agency and its cooperators should be able to develop projects of work that meet multiple objectives.

### 3. LaVA Implementation Appendices and Small Groups

## DISCUSSION

- Three small groups were identified during the meeting. Each group has a Forest Service person as the Point of Contact (POC). The POC is responsible for convening and facilitating their respective small group. The small groups are responsible for conceptualizing what their respective appendix would contain and writing the appendix. Draft appendices are due by April 11, 2018. The three small groups, the POCs, and group membership are outlined below:
  - **Cooperating Agency:** Melissa Martin POC
    - Leanne Correll – SER CD
    - Mark Conrad (or another WGFD rep) - WGFD
    - Justin Williams – Dept. of Ag.
  - **Public Engagement:** Aaron Voos POC
    - Brian Lovett - DEQ
    - Larry Hicks – Little Snake River CD
    - Dena Egenhoff – Cheyenne BOPU
  - **Internal:** Liz D’Arcy/Michael Salazar POCs
    - Carson Engelskirger – State Forestry
    - Bret Callaway – DEQ
- There will not be additional formal comment periods on LaVA projects after a decision is signed. However, the agency will always accept comments and wants to continue to engage the public throughout the life of the project. It was suggested that we follow a similar format to our bi-annual cooperating agency meetings. Meaning, we can have one informative session in the spring about upcoming projects and one field trip in the fall to see on-the-ground work. If the Forest solicits for comments at these sessions, we must ensure the right questions are being asked. Providing a response similar to the response provided after the January public engagement sessions could be beneficial.
  - In addition to bi-annual meetings, additional informative opportunities could be provided to members of the communities in the immediate vicinity of projects occurring in their area.

- Additionally, it is important to provide other alternative ways for the public to engage (e.g. Facebook, news releases, storyboard, videos).
- *If NGOs or homeowner groups have resources set aside to complete projects, cooperating agencies should coordinate plans on their behalf.*

## CONCLUSION

Three small groups were created to work on LaVA implementation appendices. Draft appendices are due to Melissa Martin by April 11, 2018. The group brainstormed ideas for the public engagement portion of implementation which included bi-annual engagement sessions and alternate ways to engage in the project.

## 4. LaVA Draft EIS

### DISCUSSION

- The Forest is working to release drafts of each chapter in the DEIS individually so that the cooperating agencies have time to make comments. Chapters 1 and 2 are the “heart” of the document, while Chapters 3 and 4 will provide more detail.
- The group made the following suggestions for Chapter 1:
  - Additional information should be added to water quality, recreation, and wildlife sections.
  - The physical barrier issue of dead jackstraw stands present issues to range, recreations, and fuels resources. These issues should be addressed in the EIS.
  - Rather than addressing the mountain pine beetle specifically, addressing the bark beetle in general would more accurately describe the epidemic in the forest.
  - Desired conditions should also be identified in Chapter 1.
  - The criteria for prioritizing projects should be reflected in the purpose and need section of the chapter.
- Continue to send wanted changes to Melissa Martin no later than close of business March 23, 2018. Chris Jones will continue editing Chapter 1 after hearing comments from the group. A draft of Chapter 2 will be shared with the cooperating agencies by April 11th, 2018

### CONCLUSION

The group reviewed the draft version of Chapter 1 for the DEIS. If anyone would like to make additional comments to those mentioned in the meeting they should submit those to Melissa No later than close of business March 23, 2018. Chris Jones will continue editing Chapter 1 after hearing comments from the group. A draft of Chapter 2 will be shared with the cooperating agencies by April 11th, 2018

**Meeting adjourned.**